



## Green Facts

### Plastic Facts

- Almost all types of plastic are recyclable.
- Advantages of recycling plastic:
  - Conservation of non-renewable fossil fuels - Plastic production uses 8% of the world's oil production, 4% as feedstock and 4% during manufacture.
  - Reduced consumption of energy.
  - Reduced amounts of solid waste going to landfill.
  - Reduced emissions of carbon-dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), nitrogen-oxide (NO) and sulphur-dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>).
- The world's annual consumption of plastic materials has increased from around 5 million tonnes in the 1950s to nearly 100 million tonnes today. (WRAP)
- One tonne of plastics is equivalent to 20,000 two litre drinks bottles or 120,000 carrier bags
- The amount of plastic waste generated annually in the UK is estimated to be nearly 3 million tonnes.
- The UK currently recycles approximately 24% of plastic while a European country like Germany recycles 44% (British Plastic Federation)
- Plastic makes up 9% of average household waste. (WRAP)
- All branches of Tesco and Sainsbury's offer a plastic bag recycling service.
- A report on the production of carrier bags made from recycled rather than virgin polythene concluded that the use of recycled plastic resulted in the following environmental benefits: (WRAP)
  - reduction of energy consumption by two-thirds
  - production of only a third of the sulphur dioxide and half of the nitrous oxide
  - reduction of water usage by nearly 90%
  - reduction of carbon dioxide generation by two-and-a-half times
- 1.8 tonnes of oil are saved for every tonne of recycled polythene produced
- Over 50% of litter found on UK beaches in 2008 was plastic litter, an increase of more than 120% since 1994.
- 75% of post consumer plastic waste is sent to landfill
- Around 45 billion individual items, approximately one million tonnes of domestic plastics, are disposed of every year in the UK (WRAP)
- Every year an estimated 4.5 billion plastic bags are given away by UK supermarkets.
- Incinerating 10,000 tons of waste creates 1 job, landfilling the same amount creates 6 jobs while recycling the same 10,000 tons creates 36 jobs.
- Plastic bags and other plastic rubbish thrown into the ocean kill as many as 1,000,000 sea creatures every year.
- Plastics can take up to 400 years to break down in a landfill.
- If you lined up all the polystyrene foam cups made in just 1 day they would circle the earth.
- In one year along, approximately 684,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions were saved by recycling the UK's plastics, the equivalent of taking 216,000 cars off the road! (BPF).
- There are about 1,000 milk jugs and other bottles in a recycled plastic park bench. (RECOUP)
- Recycling just one plastic bottle saves enough energy to power a 60W light bulb for six hours (Recoup)

### Glass Facts

- Each UK family uses an average of 500 glass bottles and jars annually.
- The largest glass furnace produces over 1 million glass bottles and jars per day.
- Glass is 100% recyclable and can be used again and again.
- Glass that is thrown away and ends up in landfills and will never decompose.
- 1 recycled glass bottle would save enough energy to power a computer for 25 minutes



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### Paper Facts

- 70% less energy is required to recycle paper compared with making it from raw materials.
- One tonne of paper from recycled pulp saves:
  - 17 trees
  - 3 cubic yards of landfill space
  - 7,000 gallons of water
  - 4200kWh
  - 390 gallons of oil
  - prevents pounds of air pollutants
- Recycled paper produces 73% less air pollution than if it was made from raw materials.
- 12.5 million tonnes of paper and cardboard are used annually in the UK.
- The average person in the UK gets through 38kg of newspapers per year. It takes 24 trees to make 1 ton of newspaper.

### Can Facts

- 24 million tonnes of aluminium is produced annually, 51,000 tonnes of which ends up as packaging in the UK.
- If all cans in the UK were recycled, we would need 14 million fewer dustbins.
- £36,000,000 worth of aluminium is thrown away each year.
- Aluminium cans can be recycled and ready to reuse in just 6 weeks.
- 1 recycled tin can would save enough energy to power a television for 3 hours.

### Wood Facts

- The number of trees felled in one day globally would cover Barbados
- Each year, 750,000 tonnes of wood are thrown away - only 300,000 tonnes are recycled
- Each year, one million trees are chopped down to make 44 million British Telephone Directories, most of which are never used

### Household Facts

- The largest lake in Britain could be filled with rubbish from the UK in 8 months.
- On average, 16% of the money you spend on a product pays for the packaging, which ultimately ends up as rubbish.
- Almost half of the contents of our dustbins could potentially be recycled.
- We could compost an additional 30% of vegetable peelings and other organic waste we throw away.
- Despite the potential to recycle or compost around 68% of our waste, we are only recycling or composting 15%.
- Making compost from kitchen and garden waste can reduce 50% of all refuse going to landfill.
- The unreleased energy contained in the average dustbin each year could power a TV for 5,000 hours.
- In 1 hour we produce enough waste in the UK to fill the Albert Hall. (Waste watch)
- In 1 day there would be enough waste to fill Trafalgar Square to the top of Nelson's Column. (WW)
- In 1 year there would be enough waste to fill dustbins stretching from the Earth to the Moon. (WWh)
- Recycled materials can return to the marketplace in as little as 30 days.



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### Transport Facts

- Tune your car properly and reduce fuel usage by 5%
- Up to 80% of a vehicle can be recycled

### Fossil Fuel Facts

- Fossil fuels are depleted at a rate 100,000 times faster than they are formed
- Oil accounts for a quarter of all pollution incidents; one can of oil poured onto a lake can cover an area the size of two football pitches

### Christmas Facts

- The cost of the average Christmas lunch is estimated at £14 per person but the ingredients could have flown 84,612 miles producing the same amount of greenhouse gas from planes as 50,000 three-bedroom semis in a year.
- In 2004, the UK sent 744 million Christmas cards; if they were all recycled, it would have saved 248,000 trees.
- In 2005, only 82 million cards were recycled but it diverted 1,630 tonnes of rubbish from landfill sites
- In 2001 only 1.2 million of the 7.5 million Christmas trees bought were recycled; the rest created enough rubbish to fill the Albert Hall in London three times

### Other Facts

- One litre of solvent is enough to contaminate 100 million litres of drinking water
- UK uses over six million toner cartridges annually - approximately 50% end up in landfill sites
- 60 million fluorescent tubes are sold in the UK every year; very few are recycled - One tube can pollute 30,000 litres of water beyond a safe level of drinking
- The firework display held on the Eve of the Millennium created more dioxins in fifteen minutes than an Energy from Waste incinerator would produce in 120 years